

Collaborating with Teachers: Instructional Consultation as Professional Development

Julie A. Grossman & Glenn C. Hayes
University of Maryland

Presented at the 2011 National Association of School Psychologists Convention

Abstract

This poster presents a case study demonstrating how Instructional Consultation can be an effective source of embedded professional development for teachers. This approach is one that will be increasingly important given federal policies (e.g., NCLB (2001); Race to the Top (ARRA, 2010); IDEIA (2004)) which emphasize school and teacher accountability for students' academic achievement in general education classrooms and early identification and intervention. Attendees will learn about: (1) the application of the instructional consultation model to this case study and (2) things school psychologists can do to make Instructional Consultation a positive experience for teachers.

What is Instructional Consultation?

- Instructional Consultation:** a multi-stage approach that involves collaboration between teachers and other school professionals, including school psychologists (Gravois & Rosenfield, 2002).
- Goal:** to increase student and staff performance by supporting teachers' problem solving efforts in a collaborative and data-driven fashion around academic and behavioral concerns with students (Rosenfield, 1987).
- Those involved identify needs of students and design appropriate interventions for delivery within the general education classroom.
- This process enables school psychologists, in particular, to share with teachers their knowledge about problem solving stages, link concerns with interventions, and ensure evidence-based interventions are implemented.

What Made This Collaboration Effective?

- Overall:**
- Both members of the dyad were committed to the process and to helping the student. This allowed for the process to continue in a collaborative manner and for both individuals to work through any minor hurdles.
 - Teacher and Sch Psy utilized, as appropriate, their own areas of expertise. Sch Psy took the lead in linking concerns with methods of data collection and intervention. Teacher took the lead in specific intervention strategies. Regardless of who took the lead, both individuals worked collaboratively throughout the process.

School Psychologist:

- Contributed to the success of this case study by sharing her knowledge about attaining an instructional match among student, task, and instruction. Sch Psy ensured interventions were evidenced-based and implemented with integrity. Perhaps most importantly, the school psychologist understood the need to work within the constraints of the environment. For example, the teacher did not have much time to create weekly intervention packets. Therefore, the dyad designed a fairly structured intervention and Sch Psy created five weeks of intervention packets ahead of time so that the teacher would not have to do so.

Teacher:

- Contributed to the project's success by being willing to spend time identifying and prioritizing concerns before designing an intervention. Teacher followed the process even though it required that he perform tasks typically handled by other specialists in this specific school. For example, teacher was willing to do an instructional assessment even though it was not typically done at his school. He later commented on the benefit of conducting such an assessment.

Case Study

Participants:

- Sch Psy (Sch Psy)
- 4th grade teacher
- 4th grade student

Problem Area:

- Reading

STAGE 1: CONTRACTING

Goal: Provide overview of stages in Instructional Consultation, the process of it, and what can be expected

- Sch Psy met with teacher, described the problem solving stages, had a conversation about how Instructional Consultation is a collaborative process, and got verbal consent from the teacher.

STAGE 2: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION/ANALYSIS

Goal: Discuss possible concerns, conduct instructional assessments [3 snapshots of student's performance to see what he knows and what he can do while in optimal conditions (optimal conditions = 93-97% known material)]

Sch Psy and teacher talked about all possible concerns:

- Comprehension, Vocabulary Development, Decoding Skills, Writing Skills

Sch Psy and teacher conducted instructional assessment (3 snapshots):

- What we learned?

- 1st two snapshots informed us that student has problem with responding (appropriately conveying one's understanding of something read)
- 3rd snapshot = trial teaching

Prioritizing a Concern:

- Prioritized concern = responding

- Sch Psy and teacher decided to focus on oral responding first and then to later focus on the organizational component of responding

- Before a student can understand what details should be given in a response, he needs to understand what question words are, how to identify them in text, and how to answer questions containing them

Operational Definition for oral responding:

- ...the percentage of question words (who, what, where, when) that student can identify in passages with prior knowledge that are at his instructional level and have no more than four unknown words

Case Study Cont.

Baseline Data Collection (2 baseline data points collected):

- Procedures
 - Had student review flashcards with question words/definitions
- Presented student with a familiar passage at his instructional level.
- Had student read passage and identify all of the "who" words, then "where" words, then "when" words, and then "what" words.
- Data Points
 - Baseline Points
$$\frac{\text{\# of question words student identified}}{\text{total \# of question words in passage}}$$
 - Student was, on average, able to identify 32% of the available question words (who, what, where, when)

Short Term Goal

- Short term goal = student able to identify 55% of question words in peer-expected text @ his instructional level with ≤ 4 unknown words.

STAGE 3: INTERVENTION DESIGN

Goal: Figuring out what strategy to use and the logistics of such an intervention

Goal of intervention:

- Help student increase ability to identify question words and eventually be able to generate questions (this would be a later goal)
- Intentionally created intervention addressing both skills so that intervention did not have to change when the type of data being collected changed. We also thought this would increase treatment integrity and intervention implementation.

Intervention:

- Weekly packets created by Sch Psy and given to teacher at the beginning of each week.
 - Packet = 5 pages (4 days intervention, 1 day data collection)
 - Sample daily intervention:

Day 1: Mom took me to the store to buy apples.

Circle the who question word: 1) Mom 2) Apples 3) Store 4) Took

Write a who question about the sentence. Make sure the answer to the question is the who word you circled above.

- Sch Psy provided teacher with passages to use for collecting data (all had ≤ 4 unknowns)

Case Study Cont.

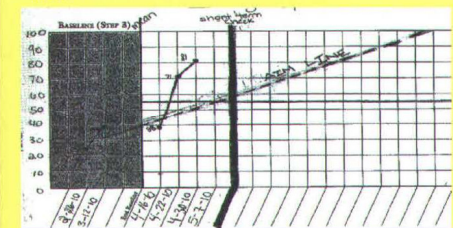
- Each week was devoted to one of the question words. Teacher decided when to move to the next question word.
- Student continued to create questions for all previously mastered question words, in addition to the one currently being focused on.

STAGE 4: INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION

Goal: Ensuring that the intervention implemented was what was intended, collecting weekly data, revising if necessary

Details:

- When: Mon-Thurs, 11:30-11:55 in 4th grade pod area; Data Collected on Fridays @ 11:30-11:55 in 4th grade pod area
- Teacher delivered intervention and collected data
- Sch Psy plotted data
- Sch Psy and teacher continued to meet once each week to assess progress and see if anything needed to change
- Data:



STAGE 5: CLOSURE/WHAT'S NEXT?

Goal: Evaluating if goals were met; making sure teacher can continue without consultant's support

- Intervention and data collection would continue for 3 more weeks even though short term goal achieved to ensure student could remain above his short term goal.
- Then, intervention remained the same but data would begin to be collected pertaining to % of questions student could create from a passage.
 - Prior to original intervention beginning, teacher and Sch Psy collected baseline data on new goal and created operational definition and short term goal
- Sch Psy was leaving school so arranged to have school counselor take over the role of plotting data
- Sch Psy provided teacher with 5 weeks worth of interventions to ensure it would not stop being implemented because of lack of material

Contact Information

Julie A. Grossman: julieg@umd.edu